



## **UNARMED CIVILIAN PEACEKEEPING:**

**HAS ITS TIME COME?**

**Briefing and Dialogue**

**Hosted by the Missions of  
Belgium, Benin, Costa Rica  
and The Philippines**

Palais des Nations, Geneva, 20 September 2012

Aide-Memoire prepared by Nonviolent Peaceforce and UNITAR



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## **Background**

On 20 September 2012, the eve of the International Day of Peace, the Permanent Missions to the UN of Belgium, Benin, Costa Rica and the Philippines in Geneva hosted a Briefing and Dialogue entitled *Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping: Has Its Time Come?* This event was co-organized by United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) and Manchester University Humanitarian & Conflict Response Institute. This meeting was a continuation of a conversation that had begun in New York on 23 March 2012 under the title *Broadening the Concept of Peacekeeping: The Contribution of Civil Society to Unarmed Protection of Civilians* that was co-sponsored by the same four Permanent Missions in New York. The event was held in the Palais des Nations, the home the United Nations Office at Geneva, with representatives of permanent missions, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and civil society in attendance.

This present Aide-Memoire was prepared by UNITAR and Nonviolent Peaceforce to offer a summary of the presentations and responses at that meeting. It is intended to serve as an input for further discussion on unarmed civilian peacekeeping.

## **Welcome and Introduction**

***Ambassador Manuel Dengo***, *Permanent Representative of the Mission of the Republic of Costa Rica*, opened the event. Here follow some of his remarks:



The participation of unarmed civilians in peacekeeping has existed in most conflict situations at different times. Civil society has always been a player, although maybe not in an organized manner. From the Costa Rican side, I think it is a very important concept to work on and to see if we can get it into a more structured framework. This initiative was started in March 2012 with a briefing to the missions to the UN in

New York and now it has its second important landmark by having this meeting here in Geneva.

## Three Keynote Presentations

The briefing began with three keynote presentations followed by questions from attendees and responses from the panel.

**Ms. Tiffany Easthom**, Director of Nonviolent Peaceforce's Mission in South Sudan, presented the theory and practice of unarmed civilian peacekeeping. Her remarks included:



The connection between violence and development is very clear. The World Bank's report states that 1.5 billion people are currently living in countries that have repeated cycles of violence. None of these countries have achieved any of the Millennium Development Goals.

The vast majority of victims of violent conflict now are civilians. Previously, conflict was between combatants, and as we see over the recent decades, that has changed and civilians are more and more directly affected in violent conflict. There is a large unmet need for civilian protection against violence and violations of human rights, and particularly for vulnerable groups: women and children and human rights defenders, humanitarian workers, the elderly. We need to be more creative and think of ways to adapt our work to address these needs.

Programming in unarmed civilian peacekeeping is done in two streams: reactive and proactive. The reactive side is direct interventions in heightened situations of tensions, when violence is occurring, and using a number of skills and capacities to be able to mitigate tensions, reduce violence and increase the safe space for civilians. That's the reactive side: when it's needed, when we're there, when we're in the moment.

The proactive side is helping societies, civilians, civil society organizations, individuals, and governments to be able to build their own capacity to keep each other and their civilians safe. Proactive programming is seen in terms of learning how to engage in nonviolent conflict resolution and community security that doesn't require arms. Therefore, reactive and proactive programming run parallel to each other. We work very hard to support local civil society to protect itself and prevent further outbreaks of violence. Violence is cyclical and it is possible to interfere and stop that cycle of violence with concentrated efforts. We support or build local protection mechanisms, and as such we see

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ourselves as a gap-filler. The state has the duty and the legal responsibility to protect the civilians and we fully respect that. We come in to support that process when there are gaps and we work very closely with the state structures and the host governments to be able to do that.

All of our staff are specially trained professionals. They undergo intensive training. We recruit people from backgrounds that are relevant to the work that we are doing. People come from all over the world. They are a mix of people: internationals that we bring in to the field teams, and national people that we hire from the local communities. They work together. They train together to implement protection programming. It's full-time, twenty-four hours, seven days a week. We live in the communities that are affected by violence. We are there. We're able to respond in the middle of the night. We're able to respond on Sundays. We have a saying in our team: violations and violence don't stop at dinnertime and they don't necessarily stop on the holidays.

*Our work is about strategic violence reduction. This is about working with the parties who are engaged in various aspects of violent conflict and working on strategies to reduce violence and to increase safe space for civilians.*

The work is very strategic: this is not about being a human shield. It's not about standing between a bullet and a civilian. That would be a protection mechanism that works once. You have the opportunity to do that once. Instead, our work is about strategic violence reduction. This is about working with the parties who are engaged in various aspects of violent conflict and working on strategies to reduce violence and to increase safe space for civilians.

We are nimble. We are able to adapt quickly. We are able to move and change our tactics as contexts are developing. We are deeply immersed in the community. We tend to work in remote locations that are under-served by the international community. A lot of violence happens when there is no one around, so we go to places where people are experiencing violence and there are very few (if any) others who are working on the ground.

We are nonviolent in practice. We are neutral or non-partisan. We work on non-partisanship as a verb. It is something that we are actively engaging with on a day-to-day basis by building equal and positive relationships to all parties in a conflict to be able to negotiate and work together. And we're cost effective.

Some of the activities that Nonviolent Peaceforce provides are:

- Accompaniment: We provide protective patrols in areas to reduce the tensions, to have a presence, to have a witness, to engage with the parties, and to find out what’s going on.
- Protective Presence: This goes well beyond just being there. We make strategic use of our presence, building relationships with all conflict parties, being able to help deter violence and protect vulnerable individuals and groups.
- Conscious Visibility: We use our visibility in a conscious way, from simple things like uniforms, flags and vehicles marked with a distinct logo, to the way that we have built relationships and engage with communities.
- Local-level Shuttle Diplomacy: It is at the local level that agreements, made at higher levels, most often break down, resulting in escalation of tension and violence.
- Facilitated Dialogue and Safe Space: There is much needed at the local level where it is almost always missing.
- Confidence Building: We are working in places where the community has had little engagement with the state structures. How do we help build the confidence between the police and the community, where maybe there has not been a very positive relationship or even no relationship at all?
- Local Capacity Building: Empowerment is a vital part of our exit strategy.
- Rumor Control: One of the best things you can do in terms of reducing violence and decreasing tensions is rumor control. In a conflict environment, rumors spread very quickly, and people displace on the basis of a rumor.

An example of partnership at work is in the Kandako community in southern Jonglei State in South Sudan. UN peacekeepers and our NP team are working together at a water point – a borehole. We are in an area where, particularly the women, were experiencing quite a bit of sexualized violence. There was a lot of friction created by ill-disciplined soldiers and there were a lot of complaints



from the community and reports of sexual violence. The women reported eighteen to twenty cases of rape per month. Women, who are the ones who get water in South Sudan, were reporting that they were unsafe to get water

We worked together with the UN peacekeepers on the ground, UNPOL and the national police service to set up a system where we would jointly patrol that area. UNPOL, the UN peacekeepers and Nonviolent Peaceforce's team took turns throughout the day, morning, afternoon and evening, to do patrols in this area, where there had been violence. We talked with the UN peacekeepers

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there, explaining the situation to them. They said that they could get their water at that borehole. They could go there as another way to boost their presence. We found over a six to eight week period of doing those patrols, the number of reported rapes dropped from eighteen to zero. We were getting feedback from the soldiers who would say, "we know that you're here, and we know why you're here." They were a little bit frustrated. But they moved on, and they've been leaving the people alone. So there's

a direct correlation to the proactive presence, the proactive engagement, and being able to work together with the protection actors on the ground, to being able to reduce violence and increase the safety and security of the civilians.

I talked about the 76,000 IDPs returning home in South Sudan. In the Philippines a thousand community members were removed from a battlefield because our team there had sufficient relationships with the parties involved to be able to negotiate the safe removal of the civilians. Likewise, we worked in Sri Lanka for many years on preventing children from being inducted into armed forces and fighting groups. In Guatemala, we provided accompaniment during elections, helping to keep human rights defenders safe while they were doing their investigations.

This work is not simply about Nonviolent Peaceforce. There are other organizations out there doing this kind of work in different places around the world: Peace Brigades International, Witness for Peace, Project South Africa. Small grass-roots organizations and larger international non-governmental organizations are all building new skill sets globally to do unarmed civilian peacekeeping.

What we recommend is that Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping is an entirely appropriate response to violent conflict in many more countries and many situations. It needs to be scaled up.

**Ambassador Jesus “Gary” Domingo**, Minister and Consul General of the Philippines to the United Nations in Geneva, provided insight into his country’s success with using the Nonviolent Peaceforce in the domestic peace process and proposed the idea of a “Geneva Agenda” for unarmed civilian peacekeeping. Excerpts of his remarks follow:



*The benefit of Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is that it enjoyed confidence on both sides, both from the Philippine government, MILF, due to its professionalism. It’s not a matter of weekend warriors, these are actually very well trained and prepared professionals. Civilian, neutral, impartial, and cost-effective! We are grateful for the contributions of Nonviolent Peaceforce as practitioners of Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping (UCP). The concept has been tested in our country—and it works.*

We are very proud and grateful that Nonviolent Peaceforce has contributed to our peace efforts in the Philippines. The Philippines is a somewhat different context than South Sudan which Tiffany just described since it is not part of the overall UN Security Council mandated peacekeeping operations. It’s a purely domestic peace process we have, in which Nonviolent Peaceforce is involved. We have essentially two internal peace process tracks: one with Muslim groups, mainly the Moro-Islamic Liberation Front, or MILF, and the other with local communist groups. We have an active peace process and I was glad to see recently in the news, we’re on the verge of finally coming with a comprehensive agreement. It’s domestic, but we do have international support. To monitor our ceasefires, we have something called the International Monitoring

Team and we had invited the Nonviolent Peaceforce to join in the civil protection component. As Tiffany outlined, the benefits of Nonviolent Peaceforce, which is a practitioner of Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping (UCP), is that, due to its professionalism, it enjoyed confidence on both sides, both from the Philippine government and the MILF. It’s not a matter of weekend warriors. These are actually very well trained and prepared professionals. Civilian, neutral, impartial, and cost-effective! The concept has been tested in our country and it works.

We are grateful for the contributions of Nonviolent Peaceforce as practitioners of Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping (UCP). The concept has been tested in our country and it works. Our event here is part two of a series of presentations which began in New York, so I don’t want to repeat what my colleagues have done in New York: our Permanent Representative Ambassador Libran Cabactulan, and Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Rafael Seguis, who was also previously chair of the government’s peace panel with the MILF. Now, I would rather just focus on my opportunity to share ideas with



you on what can we do here in Geneva, as a springboard, us being a happy customer of UCP and having worked with Nonviolent Peaceforce.



Essentially, I would like to share ideas on a possible Geneva Agenda for advancing UCP. Of course, we're sold on the concept already, so I'll give you our sales-pitch. In the UN family system, we have New York, that's where the Security Council is, that's where DPKO is, the UN General Assembly, Fourth Committee, and so on, so the more political peacekeeping *per se* is in New York at UN Headquarters, so that is the mind or the brain of the UN system. We in Geneva, on the other hand, are the heart of the UN system. This is where the humanitarian and human rights mechanisms are. What can we do here in Geneva to advance the concept? First, we are very much

attracted to the idea of having a UN General Assembly resolution on unarmed peacekeeping. I think our friends here have developed and discussed various draft proposals. We are also intrigued about the possibility of a resolution at the African Union. Definitely we here in Geneva should contribute to this overall process, all stakeholders, missions, and so on. On the overall strategic level, let us think about a General Assembly resolution, and I think my colleagues here, the co-sponsors, Costa Rica, Belgium, and Benin, already reflect an equitable geographic representation. This is something we can consider.

In Geneva, as we are the seat of the humanitarian and human rights communities, let us see what partnerships and synergies we can establish. We now work in the context of the ISC humanitarian cluster approach. Perhaps the most relevant cluster is the global protection cluster. Of course, the humanitarian cluster approach is coordinated by OCHA, which is here in Geneva. On protection, it's the UN High Commissioner for Refugees who's taking the lead. Among the members of this cluster are UNICEF for child protection, UNFPA/UNICEF for gender-based violence, UN-HABITAT for land, housing and property, UNMAS for mine action, and the Office of the High Commissioner for

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Human Rights and UNDP for the rule of law and justice. Furthermore, in following the debates here on humanitarian action, there is increasing reluctance to use the military as conveyors of humanitarian assistance, hence the importance of civilian humanitarian actors. Then, more focused on the human rights context there is an obvious role for the protection of human rights defenders.

International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, of course, is the world's humanitarian organization *par excellence*. We have the ICRC side, which focuses more on the humanitarian conflict side, and the IFRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which is the federation of all of our national societies. It's also very important to engage with

this community and I'm happy to learn that Nonviolent Peaceforce has already been speaking with both ICRC and IFRC.

*Let us all join together here from the side of the missions, the UN system, other international organizations, civil society, to see what we here in Geneva can contribute to the advancement of UCP, the 'Geneva Agenda'. Is UCP a concept whose time has come? Yes, indeed, it has.*

I very much appreciate that Tiffany said that Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping does and should emphasize the ownership and participation of local communities. Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping as a concept for the protection of migrants, expatriates, and even foreign-service personnel, I think is a direction we need to look at. It was also very interesting that we came to learn that even one of the

allies in the broader UCP alliance, Nonviolence International, has proposed some principles for expatriates, to look at the role of expatriates as a type of unarmed civilian peacekeepers. Let us also look at other possibilities such as the network of Rotary International. They have 34,000 clubs around the world, over 1.2 million members. I was happy to learn that the Rotary club of Zamboanga City in the southern Philippines is also looking at training its members in UCP. Finally, I'm also very happy to learn that UNITAR is in the process of putting together a training programme to be delivered by distance learning so that we have the maximum breadth and coverage for UCP training. So, ladies and gentlemen, let us all join together here from the side of the missions, the UN system, other international organizations, civil society, to see what we here in Geneva can contribute to the advancement of UCP, the 'Geneva Agenda'. Is UCP a concept whose time has come? Yes, indeed, it has.



**Mr. Alan Doss** of the Kofi Annan Foundation and former Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) shared his experiences in the field and described some of the limitations of conventional armed peacekeeping.

Protection has been very much at the center of the concerns of DPKO for the past decade. I was very well aware of the evolution of peacekeeping concept and practice and the growing emphasis on civilian protection, triggered initially, as you may recall, by the landmark Brahimi Report in 2000, which stimulated a great soul-searching within the United Nations and the Department of Peacekeeping and other levels about how we were performing our duties and what we should do in terms of protection of civilians. The mission I first served in, UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone, was the first to have an explicit protection mandate. Now, just about all the multi-dimensional peacekeeping missions have civilian protection as a core element of their mandate.

Today the toolkit available to peacekeeping missions to deal with civilian protection is far wider, more encompassing, than it was a decade ago. Missions are specifically tasked to deal with protection issues, develop protection strategies, joint protection initiatives with civilians in and outside of the missions, violence mapping, community liaison, and various other innovations. Much of that work is done by civilians working in UN missions. UN peacekeeping missions are not just soldiers and policemen. There's also a very significant civilian components, covering everything from HIV/AIDS, child protection, to civil affairs, reconstruction, stabilization, and so forth. I found it fascinating that in one of Tiffany's slides, she put up various things about the way Nonviolent Peaceforce works. I'm sure that was independently arrived at, but if I read the current language being used by DPKO and its instructions and directives to field missions, you will find very similar language now being used. I think that's a good thing, because that clearly shows there has been some convergence of thinking, in concept, but also in practice. That being said, and despite considerable progress in the way we do armed peacekeeping for protection, I think we have to recognize its limitations. In my view, armed protection, peacekeeping for protection, should be our last resort, not our first resort. I say that for a number of reasons. First, most obviously, soldiers are not sociologists. Soldiers come with a certain mind-set. They need to change. They need to adapt, and major efforts are now being made in that direction through pre-deployment training of soldiers who are going to be

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assigned to missions with protection responsibilities. It is still very clear they will never have the knowledge and the understanding of the local communities that others, particularly civilians who've been in those areas for long times, will have. There's a turn over. Battalions, units turn over every six to nine months, so there is a problem of continuity and anchoring that knowledge. I don't think we could pretend to replace that basic knowledge.

There's a limit to what armed peacekeepers can do, a limit to where they can be and for how long they can be there. I ran into this situation most dramatically

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in eastern Congo where I was the Head of Mission, so I was responsible. The mission was very frequently criticized whenever there was a terrible incident— and there were many. “Where are the peacekeepers?” Well the truth is, we were never going to be everywhere all of the time. It's an unfortunate fact but we have to be realistic. Inevitably we would be criticized, even if some incident occurred in areas where we

weren't even deployed. We were told, well, you have a protection mandate. But being able to do that, realistically, was obviously sometimes beyond our means. We created expectations, frankly, that couldn't be fulfilled. On the other hand, there are other civilian elements, NGOs, local communities, that were there. I think we need to work more closely with them because they could be a presence, they could witness, they could report back, not as necessarily the intelligence service of the mission, but they understood their own communities, so working with them to develop protection measures is possible. Simply because we would not have a blue helmet behind every tree, it is an absolutely indispensable requirement. There is definitely a role for non-UN civilian partners because they can often do things that are not feasible for UN peacekeepers.

This can occur because of the mandate to protect civilians involving sometimes robust methods. I had to authorize military action against certain rebel groups that threatened civilians. It was very clear that those rebel groups were not very enamored with the mission and were very reluctant to deal with us. But that was a fact; we simply could not adopt a purely neutral stance. Our mandate tasked us to prevent attacks on civilians and sometimes that involved robust action against rebel groups. In those situations it was very useful to have civilian partners who could also work not just in the mission but outside the mission with those groups to find ways to actually lower tensions and to begin to get some cooperation. We always try to be impartial but obviously in those situations we could not be neutral.

I would perhaps caution that it's not a panacea. Tiffany has shown how they can work, with the UN and other partners, and why it is important to have a close relationship. It's not a panacea for three reasons. First, civil society, dare I say it, is not always very civil. I have worked in situations where clearly civil society has become part of the conflict. Sometimes used by political enemies and so forth, they have an interest in what's going on. They are not always the most impartial participants in this process. Secondly, even international NGOs and advocacy groups have problems adopting, adapting and adjusting, just like peacekeepers, and they're not always accepted by local or national authorities. They are sometimes accused, rightly or wrongly, of proselytizing or themselves being partisan. Thirdly, not all civil society organizations or NGOs are very happy about working with UN missions. Some have an outright prohibition on that, which I think is unfortunate, but nevertheless we have to respect their views in these situations. Finally, working at the local level is extremely important, but very often the problems can't be solved at the local level, you need also access at the national level and especially if there is an SRSG, that has to be one of his or her principle jobs to use that access to get the protection message across at the highest levels, both in political civilian arenas as well as in the security arenas with the defense forces, the police, who are often part of the protection problem. I think it's important to emphasize that. Certainly the cases of the Congo and some of the other missions I presume, they were part of the problem.

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So my conclusion is then that there's a place for both. I think the key is to be able to set up mechanisms for consultation and dialogue that are collaborative and not competitive. I do want to underline that. I think that we need to recognize that lasting protection, not band aid protection, lasting protection can't be achieved in the absence of a wider political strategy that seeks to address the causes and not just the consequences of violence and attacks on civilians. That strategy, I would agree, needs to bring in many actors, and it needs to be national as well as local, because no conflict that I've been involved in has entirely national dimensions, often the seeds are local.

## Statements on Behalf of the Co-sponsoring Missions

The comments of the three keynote speakers were followed by brief statements on behalf of the missions of Benin and Belgium.

**Mrs. Marie-Claire Ouorou-Guiwa**, Minister Counselor, Benin, co-sponsor of the Briefing and Dialogue. Her comments follow.

Mr. Séraphin Lissassi, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Benin regrets not being able to personally take part in this important event. He is convinced that from today's deliberations will come recommendations and conclusions to effectively respond to various concerns regarding the restoration and maintenance of peace in general and the role of civilians therein.

Having long worked on conflicts in Africa, and in this way having been in contact with the various actors involved in this field in his former capacity as Director of the African integration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Benin, Ambassador Lissassi believes that today's topic is of particular interest especially for Africa which now has to find appropriate responses to crises and conflicts in order to establish peace and stability on the continent, requirements needed for meeting the needs of its people and the development of the continent including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

*In view of the increasing number of people living in countries affected by conflict as well as the complexity of the tasks incumbent on UN peacekeepers ... the classical doctrine of the United Nations in this matter is increasingly challenged with the assertion of the necessity of including the civil society in finding solutions to conflicts and crises and measures to be taken in situations of conflict and post-conflict to relieve human suffering.*

In view of the increasing number of people living in countries affected by conflict as well as the complexity of the tasks incumbent on UN peacekeepers in the context of the establishment and maintenance of peace, the classical doctrine of the United Nations in this matter is increasingly challenged with the assertion of the necessity of including the civil society in finding solutions to conflicts and crises and measures to be taken in situations of conflict and post-conflict to relieve human suffering.

It is no secret that NGOs have played and continue to play a very important role in restoring and maintaining peace in the world. But with the proliferation and complexity of conflict and post-conflict situations, it is necessary to examine the role that each actor can play in support of this mission. In this

regard some mechanisms may be created at local, national and regional levels to offer effective solutions regarding early warning and the protection of vulnerable persons (women, children, elderly, disabled, sick, etc.).

To achieve the desired goal with greater efficiency and decreased operational costs, we should now create new synergy among the various actors identified with particular emphasis on the role of representatives of civilian populations who must have access to appropriate training.



**Mr. Yannick Minsier**, *Secrétaire d’Ambassade (Human Rights) from Belgium, which co-sponsored of the Briefing and Dialogue.*

I would like to thank the speakers and also those who have organized this event. I would like particularly to thank Nonviolent Peaceforce. Your organization is proof of a long-standing commitment to UCP and we are happy to have you be able to contribute to the debate on this issue in Geneva. I have two short questions to Ms. Easthom. Do you always ask the agreement of the local authorities to operate in their countries or is it okay for you to work without such an agreement? Secondly, there are also regions where there is no conflict as such but where, for example, crime or organized crime makes an incredibly high number of civilian victims and it would be interesting to know if you also operate in such areas?

## **Responses to Audience Queries**

**Ambassador Manuel Dengo from Costa Rica**, *who chaired the briefing, also moderated the questions and comments from the audience.*

Some questions were addressed to the specific practices and procedures of Nonviolent Peaceforce. Other questions were directed at how unarmed civilian peacekeeping could find some space within the framework of conventional UN peacekeeping efforts.

*In response to a question on the prerequisites of Nonviolent Peaceforce for choosing a country in which to work, and about selecting project locations:*

**Tiffany Easthom:** We do need to have permission to be where we are. It would be very dangerous if we didn’t. The basic premise is that we can legally register to be in the country that we’re in. Every country has its process by which an NGO registers with whichever ministry is responsible for NGOs. At the local

level, the first thing we do when we enter community is meet with the local government representatives. It is extraordinarily important, from basic respect, to being able to set the tone for what your presence is going to be. For us to be effective, we can't be seen as a threat to the existing structures, and we can't be seen to be suspicious. Being transparent, being open and having a collegial relationship with the authorities on the ground is imperative to being effective to our own staff safety and security and it is imperative to being effective at what we do.

*Are we able to enter the country legally? Have we been invited in by civil society? Are credible civil society organizations available that recognize the work that we do, that understand what unarmed civilian peacekeeping and protection is?*

There are a number of factors involved in choosing a location: assessing the conflict and assessing the dynamics. Could the application of the methodologies that we use be effective in reducing violence and increasing the safety and security of civilians? Are we able to enter the country legally? Have we been invited in by civil society? Are credible civil society organizations available that recognize the work that we do, that understand what unarmed civilian peacekeeping and

protection is? We have to be very pragmatic about expansion decisions: where's funding available? Who is interested in doing what kind of work? Do they think that we will help facilitate safety and security for civilians in a way that they can't? And what is our value-added? We never want to do work that civil society organizations are capable of doing themselves.

*In response to the question about whether UCP can be used in the context of organized crime:*

**Tiffany Easthom:** We think about what are our abilities to influence and deter violence and what are people's motivations for being involved in what they are in. Peace Brigades International (PBI), for example, has been struggling with this in the Mexican context where they've been experiencing very serious violence related to organized drug crime. I

think there are areas where we can certainly develop appropriate protection strategies helping communities build their resiliency to resist these kinds of violence and these kinds of interventions in their community. How do you help a community keep themselves safer and be less vulnerable?

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*In response to a question on what are the lessons learned from civilian protection:*

**Alan Doss:** One key lesson is presence: being there, knowing what's going on, working with others, not just your own group, listening, outreach. One of the things we learned quickly with our armed peacekeepers is that there is no point driving through a village in an APC. It doesn't do you any good. Get out of the armored personnel carrier and walk through the village. Talk to people. Even if you can't talk directly, bring somebody along who can. That presence, that contact, even if you can't be everywhere, I think is very important. We found water points, market patrols, were very important, just helping women who otherwise might not get to market. Just have a couple of soldiers walk with them to the market, a few miles, reduce the violence, create confidence. For that, you don't need any direct communication, it's just being there.

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*In response to a question about obstacles NP and UCP face:*

**Tiffany Easthom:** There's any number of difficulties involved in this kind of work. When we're training our new staff we say, "this will be the hardest job you'll probably ever have." The difficulties range from physical difficulties: we live in remote locations in very simple and very physically challenging environments. We are in a place where we are not automatically accepted. We don't walk into a community and they say, "Thank goodness you're here. Everything will be alright." That is a process of relationship building. And those relationships have to be built and maintained

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daily. We gain acceptance and that acceptance can go away faster than you can possibly imagine. Again, relating to this issue around non-partisanship, maintaining non-partisanship as an action, as a verb, on a day-to-day basis means thinking through, every time you have a meeting. How is that going to be perceived by the other actors in that

environment? Have we been meeting with this party too frequently? Then we need to balance that out by meeting with other parties. Off the cuff remarks can be taken as a sign of shifting your non-partisanship away. We have to engage with state and non- state actors. In South Sudan, we engage some non-state armed actors who have a political agenda. They actually are willing to talk and negotiate. Then we have worked in the area near the DRC border where the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) is active—and that is not a group that you can engage with and negotiate with directly, so you have to have different strategies.

We don’t have problems getting staff. We have many more applications than (with present funding) we have spaces available. People are interested in doing this kind of work and they come from all walks of life and all parts of the world. We are blessed to be able to have a choice to draw from.

*Getting to peace is as complicated as being in a conflict.*

Financial obstacles are always there. We’re working on project-based funding where people’s concepts of conflict and post-conflict environments are quite short-term. They think about direct protection as an emergency set-up: six months’ worth of funding. Go set up your project and do that. We do a lot to create donor awareness around the complexities of both proactive and reactive work as well as the dynamics in a post-conflict environment. We see that the ceasefire is signed, the peace agreement is signed, and everybody says, “Okay, now we are in the development phase!” It doesn’t work that way. It’s not linear. It’s back and forth. Getting to peace is as complicated as being in a conflict.

*In response to a question about the relationship between the proposal for a General Assembly resolution on unarmed peacekeeping and another valuable initiative, namely the draft declaration on the human right to peace:*

**Ambassador Domingo:** My intervention was on applications of the UCP concept outside the classical framework of Chapter VII peacekeeping, Security Council-mandated operations. Most of the questions were directed against the classic mode. The Philippines’ interest and experience has been *outside* that frame. Our actual experience of UCP through Nonviolent Peaceforce was in the context of a domestic peace process, *not* a UN peacekeeping operation. About throwing the challenge of a possible resolution on unarmed civilian peacekeeping, UCP is something outside the constraints of Chapter VII. So, coming from the

*Coming from the Geneva community, let us dialogue here on the possible contours of a UCP resolution to see the views of the different communities rooted here: human rights, humanitarian, the declaration of a human right to peace.*

Geneva community, let us dialogue, have informal discussions, consultations with the stakeholders here on the possible contours of a UCP resolution and definitely we would like to see the views of the different communities rooted here: human rights, humanitarian, the declaration of a human right to peace.

*In response to a question about working with UN entities:*

**Tiffany Easthom:** We are implementing partners for both UNICEF and UNHCR. We have strong relationships with both of those agencies. We coordinate in the protection cluster system. With the High Commissioner for Human Rights we are able to work with the colleagues who are representing human rights in the mission and we quite often get phone calls from them. We are their default people whom they call when somebody comes to them and says, “I’m at risk. This is what’s happening to me,” because they can’t provide direct protection. They can investigate the case but they can’t do the direct accompaniment, the check-in calls, the protective presence for the people who are at risk, so they call us directly and then we work together with them.



Working with UN armed peacekeepers and maintaining neutrality is a very interesting thing to discuss. I mentioned earlier what we have done to set up a joint patrol schedule in Kandako, South Sudan, to divide tasks among UNPOL, the Blue Helmets, and Nonviolent Peaceforce. It’s a way of working

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collaboratively on a protection problem in the area, but yet separately and distinctly. There have been times when it was so sensitive that we actually don’t take transportation from the UN peacekeepers even though that would be really much easier and helpful to be able to do. It’s all based on the assessment of the sensitivity of the area at that time.

I think Alan makes a point that’s really important: there sometimes tends to be friction between the UN and the NGOs because we operate very differently. We are basically just misunderstanding each other. What we have found is when we take it from a very collaborative approach, in essence, we are there for the same goals.

*In response to two related questions, one (from a representative of another nonviolent peace corps, Operazione Colomba, or Operation Dove (working in Palestine, Colombia, and Albania), about the best way for UCP to relate to its ‘two elder brothers’ (the military and development cooperation); the other about whether DPKO could in future accommodate more UPCs in a sense that you have a battalion of UPCs and perhaps less of the military side:*

**Alan Doss:** Actually the number of civilians in peacekeeping missions has grown since the number of responsibilities have widened. It (UNSC mandate) covers everything practically, and they’ve become Christmas trees with all kinds of things hung there: the rule of law, justice. In a way it’s a good thing because it recognizes that peace and security are not just about military and police; they are about these other things: how to create the environment in

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which peace can be sustained. It is about justice and ending impunity, and so forth. The danger is that you get spread very thinly.

I was struck recently looking back at the first UN mission of a multi-dimensional nature, what has now become quite common, was actually the first Congo mission (ONUC) in 1960 when Dag Hammarskjöld was the Secretary-General. I discovered that the resolution authorizing that mission was three paragraphs long. Three paragraphs long! It doesn’t mention Chapter VII. It doesn’t mention any troop numbers, police numbers, civilian numbers. It basically said to the Secretary-General, “go and do this mission in

the Congo.” From that grew many years later everything we have today. It was three paragraphs. MONUC, the mission I directed before I left the UN, the last mandate resolution had something like forty-nine operational paragraphs covering, at the top, protection of civilians, first priority, but then added everything else that followed including monitoring illegal smuggling of minerals, arms, you name it. Once we have recognized that we need a comprehensive approach, we knew we needed more civilians (and there’s been a review of civilian capacity). But there is of course the danger that you end up trying to do everything.

The other issue is whether you would have in a mission a sort of a division of *unarmed* peacekeepers. In theory you have that already to some extent in a microcosm, through civil affairs, which is one of the biggest sections. Human rights sections in missions, which are joint with the High Commissioner’s office here, have also become very large. They are usually among the largest sections in these missions now. But, at the end of the day, these are peacekeeping missions, usually authorized now under Chapter VII with very important

financial implications, because these are assessed contributions through the peacekeeping budget. They're mandatory.

*I learned that if you want to get a message across, it really is about the messenger, and frankly, UN peacekeeping officials are not necessarily the best people for that.*

There has been much concern of late, even though personally I think it's somewhat misplaced, that that budget has grown. It is US\$7.6 billion this year. Frankly, small change compared to what is being spent in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, but nevertheless. I think if one were to try to shift too much in the opposite direction, some of the leading states (and not just Western states) in the Security Council and beyond would say, "Well, look, this is no longer peacekeeping as we know it. This is no longer really Chapter VII. Therefore this should not be under the peacekeeping budget." And that's a very practical, pragmatic aspect.

I think we must be careful not to squeeze out or crowd out the kinds of initiatives that are now happening through Nonviolent Peaceforce. I think some of those things really are better handled outside of the UN because you have, in some respects, fewer constraints, including all the usual UN bureaucracy, which is unavoidable in some way.

*In response to a question about measuring results and impact of UCP:*

**Tiffany Easthom:** We've been piloting some impact assessment work, both qualitative and quantitative. We've been quantifying numbers of incidents, reduction or increases in number of incidents. We have been working with a women's group that was experiencing high levels of harassment when they were out tending their crops on a women's collective farm. They stopped tending the crops. When we were able to engage in a protection strategy that helped them to return to their crops. You can physically see the crops growing and going to harvest. Qualitative things: personal perceptions of security. This is one of the key measurable indicators of whether there is an increase in safety and security. Are people on the streets after dark? Are people sending their children to school? Are they able to tend their crops? All of these are indicators of their own personal perceptions of security. When people feel afraid, life is interrupted, livelihood activities are interrupted, education is interrupted, people are not able to access health care, so we work on those things.

*In response to a question about protection mechanisms:*

**Alan Doss:** We've learned a lot over the last decade or more about how to go about giving protection, working with communities. I think civilian interlocutors can be very important. If I went to a community and I sat there with the village elders and everybody else and I made some pious statement about peace and love and harmony, they'd look at me and what would they see? A white man in a suit! Well, I sometimes take the suit off, but it didn't really have much impact. And then, sometimes, I would be followed by somebody whom the mission had hired, a *local* person, then the impact was just totally different. I learned that if you want to get a message across, it really is about the messenger, and frankly, UN peacekeeping officials are not necessarily the best people for that. Finding the right interlocutor and using that, because your credibility is going to be always far less than a person from the community, who may have very different views, but if you can convince that person to then act as the intermediary, you'll be much, much more effective.

In protection, it is about rumors, it is about long-standing grievances, and in very isolated communities word spreads quickly. They have no contact with the neighboring communities, really, within a matter of hours you can have a major flashpoint on your hands and things can get very quickly out of control. Having people who you work with, who can do that within the communities, who are themselves then, not necessarily your spokesmen, but who themselves are convinced of what you're saying is in the best interests of themselves, their communities, their families. This is, I think, one of the most effective ways of trying to ensure protection.

**Tiffany Easthom:** Protection mechanisms include protective accompaniment and protective presence. They are slightly different. Accompaniment is much more intense. It's very much focused on a person or an organization or a community that is experiencing a very specific threat for specific reasons. Protective presence is much more about being strategic about where we are: water points, the river, when women are getting firewood. For pastoralists and agriculturalists, protective presence involves cattle moving through a particular area. Right now, we've got a team in an environment where there's a rebel group that's becoming very active and they're negotiating and reaching out to all parties to try and figure out a way to keep the civilians safe in that area if things continue to escalate in the way that they are.

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We talked about shuttle diplomacy and we talked about multi-level diplomacy, and this is about pushing from the bottom, keeping our feet deeply rooted at

the community level where people are directly affected by violence, and helping to amplify their voices up that chain of influence and power through, and at, county level, at the state level, at the national level, at the international level. One of things that we did with that state border conflict I was talking about was to bring the members of parliament from that area out of Juba to a tiny little village that straddled the border so that they could talk directly to their people and then report back at the higher level. Multi-level diplomacy is a very important part of it. When I talk about rumors control in a place like South Sudan that has almost zero tarmac and very little mobile phone coverage, it's very physical.

*Dr. Thierry Tardy from the Geneva Centre for Security Policy posed three questions for further exploration.*



Being myself skeptical about the extent to which armed peacekeepers can indeed protect civilians, mainly for the reasons explained by Alan Doss, I welcome the initiative of unarmed protection. I'd like to ask three questions.

The **first question** is about the kind of obstacles that you are facing in promoting the concept. How receptive are UN bodies, DPKO?

The **second question** is, on the issue of neutrality, and I'd like to link this with the humanitarian discourse on the necessity to preserve the humanitarian space, partly because they want to be seen as neutral, because you said you were working with peacekeepers, and that seems to be part of the way you operate, but then how far are you from that debate about the necessity to preserve a kind of humanitarian space? How is this applied to your own concept to preserve your neutrality?

And the **third question** is about the measurement of the impact of your activities. I'd be curious to know if you've been able to measure the mechanism by which you manage to protect people. Alan Doss mentioned the idea of protection by presence, but there must be other mechanisms, a mediation, a trust that you get from the people. What are the mechanisms that come in to play to make what you do indeed effective?

## Closing Remarks



**Prof. Mukesh Kapila** of the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute, the University of Manchester, and former Special Adviser to the United Nations, offered some concluding remarks to outline a future vision for UCP within the larger frames of UN peacekeeping, human rights, and humanitarian action.

Let me conclude with about four questions or points. Firstly, I think, to make the point that peacebuilding is not a subset of humanitarian action or development action. Normally, our world is divided up. Basically, there's the humanitarian industry. Then there is a development industry, of which I also spent time in UNDP and elsewhere. Then there is the political side, which is the over-arching framework for everything else. Now, how come we always assume that the values of peace flow from humanitarian values? Those terms are so colored by humanitarian thinking that completely blinkers us in talking about the values of peace, which may not be exactly the same as the values of humanitarian action, and in fact, may supersede the values of traditional humanitarianism. I think that it is wrong to be thinking of the work of peacebuilding as simply either a subset of or derivative of humanitarian work. The other way around may be more appropriate. If we do that, then we are limiting the development of this sector to the constraints, political as well as others, that are stopping humanitarians from bringing relief to all sorts of situations, whether it is in Syria, whether it is in the Nuba mountains or in Rwanda. Peacebuilding is not to be thought of in humanitarian terms. This is a subject on which I think it is quite serious to have a debate at some appropriate time. I think by limiting ourselves to a human rights frame is also going to limit the work of peacebuilding.

The second point I would make is that it would be excellent if the General Assembly would pass a resolution and, Alan, I very much like your example of the 1960 UN resolution. I very much hope that the numerous drafts that are currently in circulation, I suggest we throw them away. I suggest we revert to some simple formulation of the General Assembly, which is liberating. We do not want forty-nine operational paragraphs, which basically constrain, limit, put in boxes, and ultimately render futile the actual act of using nonviolent means to bring about peace. I much favor the three paragraph model, where the General Assembly states its aspirations, its best wishes, its prayers, its blessings, and

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then liberates the energies of nations, communities, and peoples all over the world to think of how to implement.

Thirdly, we need institutional innovation. What is the point of having new ideas, new concepts in a new and changing world when we are trying to fit it in to the same old box? It's not about Chapter VI or Chapter VII or about the UN or not about the UN. Let us think of institutional innovation, and with that comes financing innovations without which nothing can happen. There are plenty of resources out there. The UN peacekeeping operation in the Congo, when I last looked, cost over a billion dollars a year. With due respect, one must ask the question, if you were running a business enterprise with a capital of a billion dollars, what rate of return would you seek on that kind of investment? This is not intended to be critical other than to say that I think we need more financial institutional innovation. We have philanthropists now throwing billions into global health and many other issues. When we talk about institutional and financial innovation, we mean not being a donor and recipient, a charity recipient or a charity giver, but a partnership of those who wish to invest. This will require different type of thinking, rather than the one that we currently have.

Finally, one of the interesting things that came out from the many examples is that there are fifty shades of unarmed civilian peacekeeping and not just one. What that means is that in developing the doctrine further, in developing the capacities further, rather than what usually happens when one works internationally is everything is consolidated into one doctrine and then it's applied in a template way. I worked in many global institutions and I recognize the danger when you try and take that approach. Now, can we actually do it both bottom-up and top-down at the same time? Building on the strengths of both those directions of travel? I think it's possible because you live in a globalized and interconnected age and this is possible now. In the early days, we worked only through very narrow institutions. Now we live in a rebellious world with many voices, many forms of institutions, many forms of relationships that are within and beyond institutions. There are possibilities of capacity development that don't fit into the normal mode of capacity development. And therein lies the greatest hope for bringing peace and security.

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**Ambassador Dengo:** I think basically you have summarized it in one way, balance in different directions, be it from the combination civil society, UN, government, be it top-down, bottom-up or just about being balanced, a balanced approach. The resolution, yes, we all wish that resolutions were three paragraphs long, but then we would need a resolution to implement the three paragraphs. I think this discussion today has been very useful to many of us who are really informed of this type of activity and I hope this will help those who are in the business of bringing peace to see how we can utilize all those banks of resources that can actually accomplish peace.

Tomorrow is the International Day of Peace. With that we now close the session and thank all the panelists for their excellent interventions, the audience for their questions, and the four sponsors and organizers, especially UNITAR, for organizing this side event.